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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**October 2, 2003**

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### **10<sup>th</sup> GUILTY PLEA IN FLOREK CAR DEALERSHIP FRAUD CASE**

**FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA** -- The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona announced that on October 1, 2003, STEVEN JOSEPH FIORENTINO, (6/6/1954), formerly of Flagstaff, Arizona, currently of Phoenix, Arizona, pled guilty to Mail Fraud and Conspiracy, in federal district court in Phoenix, Arizona, for his part in the Joe Florek Volkswagon-Audi Car Dealership fraud case.

FIORENTINO, had been charged with: six counts of violating Title 18 of the United States Code, Section 1341, Mail Fraud; eleven counts of violating Title 18 of the United States Code, Section 1343, Wire Fraud; nineteen counts of violating Title 18 of the United States Code, Bank Fraud; and one count of violating Title 18 of the United States Code 371, Conspiracy.

The indictment alleges that from January, 1998 through October, 2000, while employed at Joe Florek VW in Flagstaff, Arizona and Gray Mountain Auto Connection in Gray Mountain, Arizona, the defendants engaged in a massive scheme to defraud fifteen lending institutions, two automotive extended warranty companies, wholesale auto auctions and the consuming public who purchased automobiles from the dealership. The indictment also alleges the defendants specifically targeted Native Americans throughout Northern Arizona in the execution of their scheme.

(MORE)

FIORENTINO is the tenth defendant in the case to plead guilty. Jay J. Widore, Phoenix, Arizona (6/15/1958), James Edward Stephenson, Phoenix, Arizona (4/15/1946), Clayton Scott Adams, Phoenix, Arizona (3/25/1958), Robert Lewis Canfield, Page, Arizona (11/9/1959), Leonard Cardone, Phoenix, Arizona (2/13/1971), Brandon Fiorentino, Glendale, Arizona (7/19/1979), Jason Hibbard, Reno, Nevada (8/10/1974), Jeff Heimann, Cave Creek, Arizona (4/29/1962), and Phil Macaluso, Las Vegas, Nevada (2/16/03), have all previously plead guilty and are awaiting sentencing.

Convictions for Mail Fraud and Conspiracy each carry a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine or both.

Sentencing is set before the Honorable Mary H. Murguia on February 23, 2004, for all defendants.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (Phoenix and Flagstaff Offices) with the assistance of the Arizona Department of Public Safety, the City of Flagstaff Police Department, the Coconino County Sheriff's Department, the Arizona Department of Motor Vehicles and the Arizona Department of Liquor Licenses and Control.

The prosecution is being handled by Mark E. Aspey, Assistant United States Attorney, District of Arizona, Flagstaff, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-03-049-PCT  
RELEASE NUMBER: 2003-172

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